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Center for Albanian & American Studies
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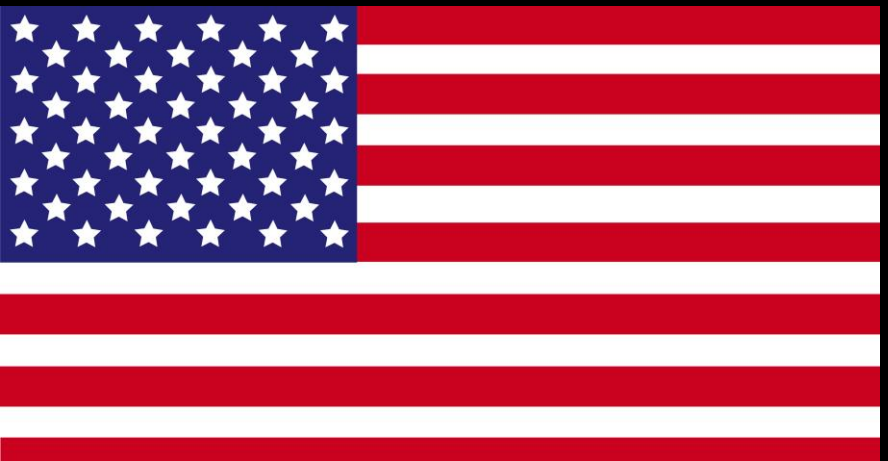

- **The United States recognized Albania in 1922** and maintained diplomatic relations until they were broken in 1939 after the Italian occupation. During the communist regime (1946–1991), relations were severed completely. However, **after the fall of communism in the early 1990s**, the U.S. became one of Albania's strongest allies, supporting democratization, NATO membership (achieved in 2009), and regional stability. **The United States also played a decisive role in the liberation of Kosovo in 1999**, leading the NATO military intervention that ended Serbian repression and paved the way for Kosovo's independence. Today, U.S.-Albania relations are close and cooperative, especially in defense, anti-corruption, and Euro-Atlantic integration efforts.

Center for Albanian and American Studies

- The *Center for Albanian and American Studies* was established within a university framework as a pioneering academic initiative dedicated to exploring and promoting the historical, political, and cultural ties between the Albanian people and the United States of America. Founded by Mal Berisha, former Ambassador of Albania to the UK, the Center serves as a platform for research, education, and public diplomacy.
- A unique feature of the Center is its dedication to honoring the legacy and contributions of 20 of the most prominent U.S. Presidents and political leaders who have played a pivotal role in supporting the Albanian cause, particularly the liberation of Kosovo. Among these are Presidents **Woodrow Wilson**, **Dwight D. Eisenhower**, **George H. W. Bush**, **Bill Clinton**, **George W. Bush**, **Barack Obama**, **Donald Trump**, and **Joseph Biden**, all of whom contributed in various ways to the preservation of Albania's sovereignty and Kosovo's independence.
- Additionally, the Center highlights the influence of key U.S. senators and congressmen, including **Senator Bob Dole**, **Senator John McCain**, **Congressman Joseph DioGuardi**, and **Congressman Eliot Engel**, whose tireless advocacy for Albanian freedom and rights helped shape American foreign policy in the Balkans.
- Through this Center, Albania commemorates and studies these historical alliances, fostering future generations' understanding of the vital transatlantic relationship between Albanians and Americans.

CENTER FOR ALBANIAN AND AMERICAN STUDIES

US President G.W.Bush and Albanian PM Sali Berisha, Tirana, Albania, June 10,2007

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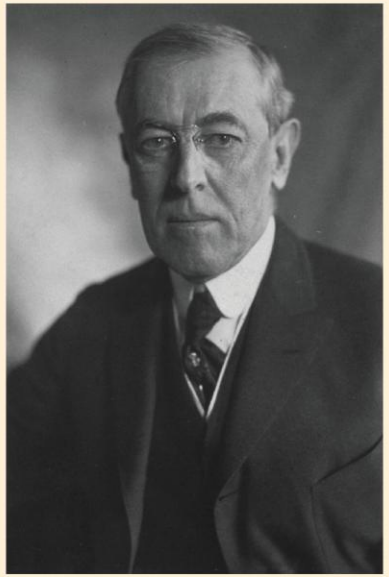
Thomas Woodrow Wilson (December 28, 1856–February 3, 1924), 28th President of the United States, in office March 4,1913 – March 4,1921.
He was President of Princeton University from 1902 to 1910.
As the US President he issued his Fourteen Points with the view of a post-war world that could avoid another conflict.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson

He went to Paris in 1919 to create the League of Nations and shape the Treaty of Versailles, with special attention on creating new nations out of defunct empires. Prior to the conference, he was in contact with Albanian patriots, such as Noli and Pan - Albanian Federation, " The Hearth".
He promised them before departing to Paris: ***"I shall have but one voice at the Peace Conference, and I will use that voice in behalf of Albania".***
Albania's territorial integrity was confirmed at the Paris Peace Conference, after President Wilson dismissed a plan by the European powers to divide Albania among its neighbors.Largely for his efforts to form the League, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919 while Albanians credit President Wilson for saving their country.
They are always thankful to him.
The Albanian – American relations have a solid foundation based on President Wilson's legacy.



George Herbert Walker Bush

George Herbert Walker Bush (born June 12, 1924) served as the 41st President of the United States from 1989 to 1993.
Bush held a variety of political positions prior to his presidency, including Vice President of the United States in the administration of Ronald Reagan (1981–1989) and Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) under Gerald R. Ford. Bush was born in Massachusetts to Senator Prescott Bush and Dorothy Walker Bush. Following the attacks on Pearl Harbor in 1941, at the age of 18, Bush postponed going to college and became the youngest naval aviator in the US Navy at the time.
He served until the end of the war, then attended Yale University. Graduating in 1948, he moved his family to West Texas and entered the oil business, becoming a millionaire by the age of 40. He took the US President's Office on January 20, 1989 until January 20, 1993. He is well known as a friend of Albania and Albanians. He even paid a short touristic visit to Vlora, together with his wife, Barbara and General Colin Powel in summer 1996. The followings are remarks prior to discussions with President Sali Berisha, June 15, 1992

President Berisha. Thank you very much. We appreciate also very much the attitude of United States adopted toward ex-Yugoslavia. I could assure you that the heartiness of your attitude and the statement that Mr. Baker made in London was very important to slow down the activity and to stop the shifting of the war to Kosovo and other regions.

President Bush. Well, we want to talk a little more about that when we have our private meeting, because we are very anxious to be helpful where we can. But you're so close to it; I want to get your views on Kosovo and see where we go.

During the meeting with the Albanian President Sali Berisha, President Bush, was informed about the situation on Kosova. He asked him to show the map of Kosova. President Berisha showed the map.
After that, President Bush promised that Milosevic will never cross this red line, drawing the border line between Serbia and Kosova.
That was the guaranty that President Bush gave to Albanians in Kosova, something that was reconfirmed by President Clinton in the Oval Office during his next visit of President Berisha to the White House, September 1995.

urged the Serbian leadership to "respect the minority rights" and refrain from "further repression in Kosovo."[3] The UN made no official acknowledgement of the seriousness of the situation and ignored early requests by Albanian President Sali Berisha for deploy-

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William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton

William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton (born William Jefferson Blythe III, August 19, 1946) served as the 42nd President of the United States from 1993 to 2001. He was the third-youngest president; only Theodore Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy were younger when entering office.

His wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, is currently the United States Secretary of State. She was previously a United States Senator from New York, and also candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008.

To stop the ethnic cleansing and genocide]of Albanians by nationalist Serbians in the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's province of Kosovo, Clinton authorized the use of American troops in a NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999, named Operation Allied Force.
General Wesley Clark was Supreme Allied Commander of NATO and oversaw the mission. With United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, the bombing campaign ended on June 10, 1999.Clinton's administration recognized, "a systematic campaign of terror, including murders, rapes, arsons and severe maltreatments against ethnic Albanians.

He stopped the "ethnic cleansing" of Milosevic's regime against ethnic Albanians.

President Clinton is regarded by Albanians as their closest friend and is awarded with the title **Honoris Causa** by the University of Prishtina, during his visit to Kosova. There is a boulevard in Prishtina named Bill Clinton. President Clinton
addressed to the American nation on 24th of March 1999, right after the bombardment against Serbian military target commenced:

"We and our NATO allies have taken this action after extensive and repeated efforts to obtain a peaceful solution to the crisis in Kosovo. (CNN, Focus on Kosovo, March 24, 1999)

"Our purpose here is to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe or a wider war. Our objective is to make it clear that Serbia must choose peace or we will limit its ability to make war." (CNN, Focus on Kosovo, March 25, 1999)

President Clinton followed the excellent tradition of his predecessors towards Albanians in both sides of the border.

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Barak Hussein Obama

Barak Hussein Obama was born on August 4, 1961. He is the 44th and current President of the United States. He is the first African American to hold the office.
Obama is a graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School, where he was the first African American president of the Harvard Law Review. He was a community organizer in Chicago before earning his law degree.
He worked as a civil rights attorney in Chicago and also taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School from 1992 to 2004.Obama served three terms in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004.
President Obama played a key role at the very end of the process of membership of Albania to NATO. President Obama will be remembered by Albanians as the US President who handed over the protocol of membership of Albania to NATO to the President and Prime Minister of Albania.

Assumed office, January 20,2009

During his speech on that day he stated:

I want to address my remarks directly to the delegation from Albania and Croatia. Welcome to NATO! We are very excited about your participation at the Atlantic alliance.
I think it is important to point out that both Croatia and Albania have already done many significant things on behalf of the alliance including 140 Albanians and 296 Croatian troops who have served in Afghanistan.
And I think that indicates the degree to which there will be strong contribution to the alliance.

To both countries, your large contributions, your proportionally large contributions to NATO joined efforts, show what the priority you made this, and we are going forward. We are proud to have you as allies.
Congratulation, as well on the progress you have made in difficult reforms that brought you to this point.
Both countries have achieved an extraordinary amount and continuing along this path will help you becoming even closer to euro-Atlantic integration.

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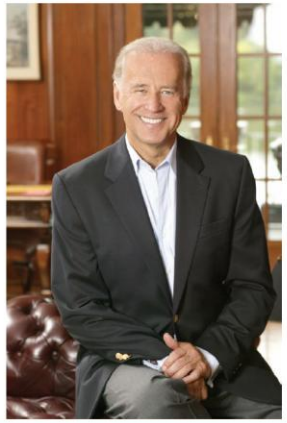
VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN A GREAT FRIEND OF ALBANIANS

Joseph Robinette "Joe" Biden, Jr. born November 20, 1942) is the 47th and current Vice President of the United States. He was a United States Senator from Delaware from January 3, 1973 until his resignation on January 15, 2009, following his election to the Vice Presidency. Biden was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania and lived there for ten years before moving to Delaware.
He became an attorney in 1969, and was elected to a county council in 1970. Biden was first elected to the Senate in 1972 and became the sixth-youngest senator in U.S. history.

He was re-elected to the Senate six times, and was the fourth most senior senator at the time of his resignation.

Biden was a long-time member and former chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. His strong advocacy helped bring about U.S. military assistance and intervention during the Bosnian War. Biden is a closed friend of Albanians. He has participated several times to various meetings organized by Albanian Americans, especially those of Albanian American Civic League where he has expressed his views about the rights of Albanians in the Balkans. He is the first seating Vice President to visiting Kosovo, on May 21, 2009



He stated before the Kosova Parlament: "Kosovo's independence was "irreversible" and the "only viable option for stability in the region", and that its success as a sovereign state was "a priority for our administration".
Mr Biden was given Kosovo's highest honour, the Golden Medal of Freedom, in recognition of his support for its independence from Belgrade, which it formally declared last year.

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Joseph DioGuardi was the first Member of Congress to bring the issue of Albanian rights in the Balkans to the attention of the U.S. government through a Congressional Resolution that he sponsored as a new Member in 1986. He was also responsible for the first Congressional hearing on Kosova in 1987. He has made more than thirty trips to the Balkans since leaving Congress in 1989 in his capacity as the founding, volunteer president of the Albanian American Civic League.

As the president of the Albanian American Civic League, DioGuardi has worked with members on both sides of the political aisle in an effort to bring lasting peace and stability to the Southeast Europe. In 1986, he convinced Congressmen Tom Lantos and John Porter, co-chairs of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, to put the issue of Albanians in Yugoslavia on their agenda.

He then introduced the first Congressional Resolution in the House and the Senate in support of Albanian human rights in the Balkans. In 1990, he and Congressman Tom Lantos visited Kosova in order to challenge the brutal policies of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic's regime there, after which they made the first official trip to Albania in fifty years, opening the doors to democracy in this former Communist dictatorship. Later that year, DioGuardi persuaded Bob Dole and six other U.S. senators to visit the two million Albanians in Kosova under Serbian occupation.

In 1996, DioGuardi returned to Albania with the Civic League's Balkan Affairs Adviser, Shirley Cloyes, and Congressman Benjamin Gilman, then chairman of the House Committee on International Relations, to meet with President Sali Berisha to discuss Albanian national security. He traveled to Albania again in 1998 to assess the humanitarian crisis emanating from the war in Kosova, at the request of Congressman Dana Rohrabacher. In the summer of 1999, he and Shirley Cloyes, who he had married the year before, traveled to Kosova after the NATO bombing campaign ended to assess conditions and report back to Chairman Gilman. Since then, DioGuardi, Cloyes, and members of the Albanian American Civic League Board have made many additional fact-finding missions to Kosova, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Presheva. In early 2003, they were responsible for the introduction of a Congressional Resolution (H.Res. 28, now H.Res. 24) and a hearing calling on the U.S. government to recognize Kosova's independence now, with the active support of House International Relations Committee Chairman Henry Hyde and Ranking Member Tom Lantos. In August 2003, they led a delegation with Congressman Lantos to Montenegro, the first of its kind, to assess the status of Albanians there and helped to create the first Congressional hearing, held in October 2003, on the "future of Albanians in Montenegro."

In May 2005, DioGuardi, Cloyes, and the board of directors of the Albanian American Civic League and the Albanian American Foundation held a 15 th anniversary dinner, "A Salute to Albanian Tolerance, Resistance, and Hope: Remembering Besa and the Holocaust," in conjunction with the 60 th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camps. The dinner was devoted to the role that Albanians played in rescuing Jews from the Holocaust

DioGuardi was raised in the Bronx, New York, where he graduated from Fordham Prep in 1958 and Fordham University with honors in 1962. His late father, who immigrated to America in 1929, was an ethnic Albanian who was born in Greci, the oldest Albanian-speaking village in Italy and the only one (there are fifty-one) in which Skenderbeg set foot. His mother is a first-generation Italian American who was born in New York City.

Senator Robert "Bob" Dole, a decorated World War II veteran and longtime Republican leader in the U.S. Senate, emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a leading advocate for the rights of Albanians in the former Yugoslavia. Influenced by the lobbying efforts of the Albanian American community and Congressman Joe DioGuardi, he introduced resolutions supporting Kosovo in 1986 and personally visited the region in 1991, where he witnessed firsthand the repression of Albanians by Serbian authorities. Dole consistently championed their cause, urging U.S. and NATO intervention. Before the 1999 war, he pushed President Clinton to act militarily against Milosevic and publicly countered figures like Henry Kissinger in defense of intervention. He stressed the importance of democratic self-governance, fair elections, and a binding referendum for Kosovo's future. Even after the war, Dole continued visiting Kosovo, earning deep respect from Albanians, who credit him as one of their most steadfast international allies and a true friend of their freedom.

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Madeleine Korbel Albright U.S. Secretary of State

Madeleine Korbel Albright was nominated by President Clinton on December 5, 1996 as Secretary of State.

After being unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate, she was sworn in as the 64th Secretary of State on January 23, 1997. Secretary Albright is the first female secretary of state and the highest ranking woman in the history of the U.S. government.

Prior to her appointment, Secretary Albright served as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations (presenting her credentials at the UN on February 6, 1993) and as a member of President Clinton's Cabinet and National Security Council.

Madam Secretary Albright was very much involved on the Kosova question. She was very active and due to her past she understood very well the magnitude of persecution and discrimination of Albanian people in Kosovo. In the capacity of the Secretary of State, she participated to the Rambouillet Conference and worked vigorously to come to an accord that would made Kosovar Albanians get rid of the Serbian yoke. The conference failed to produce an accord because the Serbs rejected terms and conditions offered by the international community.
That made the NATO starts a campaign of 78 days bombardment against Serbian military targets. Secretary Albright played a key role on taking that decision.
NATO undertook its first military action since it was created.

Years later, Secretary Albright, as a Chairwoman of NDI on July 5 2005 addressing to the Kosova Parliament stated the followings:

…As you know, I am here in Pristina this week, as chairman of America's National Democratic Institute. I no longer speak for the government of the United States. But I will never forget my visit here six years ago as America's Secretary of State.

I spoke to a large crowd assembled in this capital city's central square. Everywhere there were signs and banners. It was a time of great emotion, of grief and joy, anger and hope.
The years of grinding repression and the horror of ethnic cleansing were over. The fighting had ended. Refugees were returning. The displaced were reclaiming their homes. At long last, Kosovo was free.
Together we pledged that never again in Kosovo would people with guns come in the night; never again would houses and villages be burned; never again would there be terror and mass graves. Never again would the people of Kosovo have to live in fear.
The time had come to begin a new era in this storied land as part of a new start for the entire region.

...

During these past six years, you have shown the world that the people of Kosovo are builders; not only world-famous builders of houses and public structures, but builders of new and democratic institutions.
Men and women of every age and ethnicity have worked to lay the groundwork for democracy.
You have formed political parties and held elections.
You have developed independent media and established a judicial system.
You have created governments at the central and local level and worked constructively with the international community. And you have moved closer to the long-awaited day when Kosovo's final status will be determined. I congratulate you on what you have accomplished.

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SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, A STRONG SUPPORTER OF KOSOVA'S INDEPENDENCE

John Sidney McCain III was born on August 29, 1936, at Coco Solo Naval Air Station in the Panama Canal Zone. McCain graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1958. He also graduated from flight school in 1960.

With the outbreak of the Vietnam War, McCain volunteered for combat duty and began flying carrier-based attack planes on low-altitude bombing runs against the North Vietnamese. He escaped serious injury on July 29, 1967, when his A-4 Skyhawk plane was accidentally shot by a missile on board the USS Forestal, causing explosions and fires that killed 134.

On October 26, 1967, during his 23rd air mission, McCain´s plane was shot down during a bombing run over the North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. He broke both arms and one leg during the ensuing crash. McCain was moved to Hoa Loa prison, nicknamed the "Hanoi Hilton," on December 9, 1969. McCain eventually spent five and a half years in various prison camps, three and a half of those in solitary confinement, and was repeatedly beaten and tortured before he was finally released, along with other American POWs, on March 14, 1973, less than two months after the Vietnam cease fire went into effect. McCain earned the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross.

John McCain III retired from the United States Navy in April 1981. In 1982, he was elected as a Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives from Arizona's 1st congressional district. After serving two terms there and making an impression as a rising political figure, he was elected U.S. Senator from Arizona in 1986. Since then, he was consecutively re-elected to the Senate.

Senator McCain is one of the greatest American politicians who understood the gravity of the tragedy of Albanians in Kosova. Being affiliated with other US members of the House and Senate such as Senator Robert (Bobe) Dole, Rep. Ben Gilman, Senator Joseph Biden, Rep. Henry Hide, Rep. Tom Lantos and last but not least, US House Representative Joe DioGuardi. He became one of the most zealous politicians in supporting the cause of Albanians who were suffering under Milosevic's repression. Senator McCain presented resolutions to the US Senate supporting liberation of Kosova.

While running for the nomination within the Republican Party for the President of the United States, Senator McCain met Albanians in Manhattan on January 2000. On that day, Former US Congressman Joe DioGuardi stated: "... **We must support John McCain because he did everything we asked of him for Kosovo, from supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army to supporting the independence of Kosovo. Two years ago he spoke in Brussels and said that independence is the only solution".**

The Albanian American Civic League honored Senator McCain with the **"Balkan Award for Peace".** During the ceremony, Senator McCain thanked the Albanians for "saving all the Jews who lived in Albania or who sought shelter there during the Nazi Holocaust".

Senator McCain with a group of Albanian Americans in NYC

Senator McCain stated: "we needed to win it." Hundreds of thousands people of Kosovo were dislocated with thousands being murdered and raped, terrible things were happening in the heart of Europe"

"While I may have disagreed with the Clinton Administration's strategy and tactics, I give the President credit for being steadfast in his commitment and now we devote all our efforts to returning these innocent people to their homes and families." "We need to make sure that one of the great butchers to appear in Europe since World War II is in the dock before a war crimes tribunal."

Continuing to show deep interests on Kosova, Senator McCain, on February 2008 released the following statement about Kosovo's declaration of independence:

"With its declaration of independence, Kosovo – and the Balkans with it – has taken a major step out of the 1990s and into the 21st century. Eleven years ago, that region was in flames, characterized by ethnic cleansing and widespread violence. Today, for the first time, the region is poised to move forward. The people of Kosovo should be commended for the great strides they have made and the bright future that lies ahead."

During a demonstration of the Albanian-Americans in Manhattan supported by Senator McCain: From right to left: Senator McCain, Shirley Cloyz, Joe DioGuardi, Mal Berisha and Hasir Shala.

"The United States and the rest of the international community can help solidify these gains by quickly recognizing Kosovo's independence. With independence, however, come domestic and international responsibilities, and the government in Pristina will be expected to protect the Serb minority, conduct a responsible foreign policy, and follow the rule of law. When I met with Kosovo's leadership in Prishtina last year, their commitment to these principles was clear. That commitment will be vital in the coming days and months in order to ensure that all parties act with prudence and restraint.

"During my visit a year ago, I saw once again the dynamism of the region's people. Today the sense is palpable that the Balkans is on the brink of a new era, and this new era should include Serbia. Serbia, which in its most recent election turned aside the temptations of ultra nationalism, must now avoid overreacting to Kosovo's declaration. Should it do so, Serbia will move down a path of greater European integration and look toward the future as a modern and prosperous nation. That vision of security and prosperity for all of the region's nations represents the future of the Balkans.

"By recognizing Kosovo's independence and by transitioning continuing responsibilities there to increasing European hands, we can at long last close the door on the region's painful past. I congratulate the people of Kosovo, and welcome them into the family of nations."

Three days after that on February 21, 200 when Serbians phalanges put on fire the US Embassy in Belgrade Senator McCain released another very important statement:

"I was disappointed to see violence break out in Belgrade, Serbia today amidst a larger, peaceful demonstration opposing independence for Kosovo. All Americans will expect that the U.S. embassy is adequately protected, and I commend the U.S. officials who wisely chose to close our mission this week in anticipation of possible unrest.

"I support independence for Kosovo and am pleased that the United States joined with our European allies, including Britain, Germany, and France, to recognize Kosovo as an independent state. Since NATO ended the Milosevic regime's brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing in 1999, Kosovo has remained under UN and NATO protection. It has been clear for some time now that independence was the proper and necessary final status for Kosovo…"

Cindy McCain with Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu

Senator McCain's wife Cindy McCain also showed concerns and interests on Kosova. She visited the Kosovar refugees in Macedonia in May 1999 and wrote articles about her shocking impressions, giving a clear picture of the human tragedy of Kosova. On March 27, 2008 she paid a visit to Kosova where she met Kosovar leaders where she stated:

"Kosovo should be economically strong. You have lots of strong friends back in my country, and one of them is also my husband".

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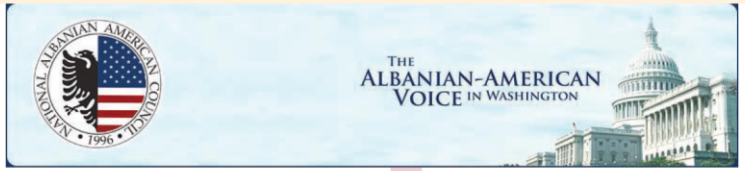

National Albanian American Council, NAAC is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advocating for Albanians and promoting peace and economic development in the Balkans by fostering democratic policy, promoting respect for human rights, and conducting educational and developmental programs.

NAAC is an Albanian-American Voice in Washington

NAAC provides timely information and analysis of Albanian issues to U.S. government officials, and policy and opinion makers in Washington, D.C.; issues press releases and position papers; members provide expert testimony at US Congressional Briefs; serve as speaker at leading think tanks and academic forums; and provide commentary for leading media outlets in the US and the Balkans.

Communities

NAAC is dedicated to engaging the Albanian-American community in the U.S. democratic process. NAAC routinely arrange meetings between community members and their elected Congressional representatives; hosts public forums by senior US government officials and Balkan scholars at cities around the country; and educate Albanian-American voters to increase their participation in elections.

NAAC's involvment in Building Democratic Institutions

NAAC assists Albanians in the Balkans to build strong democratic institutions. Together with leading "think tanks," it cosponsors roundtable conferences in Washington, DC at which scholars and policymakers offer their views on the challenges facing the region and offer possible solutions to meet those challenges.

NAAC provides Humanitarian Assistance

NAAC seeks to help the Albanian people of the Balkans, especially the children, rebuild their lives, which were shattered by a decade of war. NAAC provides assistance, through various grants and charities, to local, non-profit humanitarian organizations.

HOPE Fellowships

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

NAAC's relation with The Hope Fellowships Program

Through the Hope Fellowship Program, the National Albanian American Council's goals are to: Strengthen institutional partnerships with civil society by increasing public participation in governmental processes. Strengthen in-country human capital, increase inter-ethnic cooperation, and increase regional stability and cross-border cooperation by sharing best practices on leadership, advocacy, youth, anti-corruption, and management and communications issues. Both program goals will contribute towards the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Strategic Objectives in the Balkans and, in particular, will feed those SOs related to developing democratic institutions, increasing the involvement of citizens in political, economic and social decision-making, and developing effective partnerships between government and civil society.

NAAC's Headquarters Office is located at 1133 20th Street NW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20036 and the current Executive Director is Mr. Avni Mustafaj.

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TOM LANTOS, THE FIRST US SEATING CONGRESSMAN TO STEP IN ALBANIAN SOIL

Thomas Peter Lantos (February 1,1928–February 11, 2008) was a Democratic member of the United States House of Representatives from 1981 until his death. Lantos was the only Holocaust survivor to have served in the United States Congress.

Born as Lantos Tamás Péter to a Jewish family in Budapest, Hungary, Lantos was part of a resistance movement against the Nazis during the German occupation of Hungary. In his floor speeches, he sometimes referred to himself as one of the few living members of Congress who had fought against fascism. He moved to the United States in 1947. From 1950 to 1980, Lantos was a professor of economics, an international affairs analyst for public television, and a consultant to a number of businesses. He also served as a senior advisor to several U.S. Senators.

Congressman Lantos was one of the most interested US politicians on the Albanian question in the Balkans no matter if they lived in Albania, Kosova, Macedonia or Montenegro. He was quite close to the Albanian American community, especially through the Albanian American Civic League. He met almost every group of Albanian Americans all over the United States where he expressed his profound respect and dedication to the Albanian cause. He visited Albania and Kosova more than one time.

Congressman Lantos, during a meeting with Albanian Americans was introduced by Shirley Cloyes DioGuardi, the Balkan Affairs adviser of the Albanian American Civic League, as follows:

"…there are very few people in Congress today with Tom Lantos' wisdom, courage, and knowledge of the Albanian people…

…as a Hungarian Jew who resisted the Nazis and then narrowly escaped the Holocaust for America, Lantos entered the House of Representatives in 1980 and, a year later, joined the House International Relations Committee, where today he serves as the ranking ("number one") Democrat. In 1984, he founded the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (with Congressman James Porter), and in this context he was the first Member to respond to then freshman Congressman Joe DioGuardi's appeal to expose the plight of Albanians in the Balkans. Lantos joined with Senator Bob Dole in facilitating DioGuardi's first, dangerous mission to Belgrade and Prishtina in November 1989.

When DioGuardi returned with ample documentation of Serbian atrocities, Lantos held a hearing, over the objections of the State Department, about human rights abuses in Kosova in April 1990.

A month later, Lantos and DioGuardi focused international attention on Serbia's brutal occupation of Kosova by traveling to Prishtina to confront the Milosevic regime and police force in front of the Grand Hotel. When they responded by tear- gassing and beating the Kosovars who came to see him, Lantos vowed to DioGuardi that he would make the Albanian cause for human rights and self-determination one of his top issues in Congress. From Prishtina, they traveled by car to Tirana in an effort to help bring democracy to Communist Albania.

They were the first U.S. government officials to visit the country in fifty years. The trip to Prishtina and Tirana marked the "beginning of the end of Slobodan Milosevic," and "the start of the diplomatic effort on behalf of Albanians in the twentieth century."

Congressman Lantos has sponsored and co-sponsored several resolutions on Albania and Kosova such as H.Res, 467 with Congressman Ben Gilman at a time when it was difficult to even mention the status of Kosova.

Lantos said one time before an Albanian American audience:

"It was a privilege to stand up for the rights of Albanians on the floor of Congress and on television at the time of the most brutal and bloody suppression of Albanians by Slobodan Milosevic," and that "Milosevic's imprisonment was an example of "justice in action," and, as such, one of the "great joys" of his Congressional tenure."

Turning his attention to the Albanian people as a whole, Lantos said that he came before the Albanian Americans:

"Not only as a friend, but as one who admires Albanian achievements. Albanians in any society are the most hardworking, decent, and public-spirited group one could find. You are an enormous asset to the United States, and you are one of the great civilizations of Europe, and what you are capable of doing will be respected and valued across the globe."

Lantos then spoke about how the Albanian struggle fit into the broad struggle for human rights around the world.

"All over the world—for reasons of ethnicity, language, religion, and politics—people "are not given a fair shake, not given support to use their God-given talents. They are being left behind, not because they are inferior, lazy, or incompetent, but because they have not been given an equal chance to succeed."

Congressman Lantos pledged his commitment, and that of his daughter, Katrina Swett, to help Albanians wherever they live in the Balkans to overcome their historical disadvantages in order to succeed, prosper, and live with dignity. "Your cause is just, and the human rights community needs to respond to your plight."

Congressman Lantos will always be remembered by Albanians all over the world as a great friend, an uncompromised fighter for human rights and a politician that linked three epochs from the time when he survived Holocaust to the post World War II American Democracy, to liberation of eastern countries including Hungary where he was born from the communist oppression.

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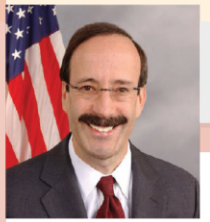

The Albanian Guy: CONGRESSMAN ELIOT L. ENGEL

Congressman Eliot L. Engel known in the Capitol Hill as The Albanian Guy is a long time close friend of the Albanian American community in the United States. He proudly admits to be a friend of Albanians. Congressman Engel is a Jew and knows very well the splendid story of the Jewish Community that was rescued in Albania by Albanian People in the course of their history and especially during the WWII.

Congressman Eliot L. Engel (born February 18, 1947) is an American Democratic politician who currently represents New York's 17th Congressional District in the House of Representatives. The district encompasses portions of the Bronx, Westchester County and Rockland County, where a large Albanian emigrants' community from all the Balkans lives. Engel was re-elected in 2008 for his eleventh term. He was first elected in the House of Representatives in 1988.

Engel is an advocate for the causes of Albanian-Americans, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and the democratic process in Albania. He was always in good relations with Albanian Organizations in the Bronx such as Vatra, LDK as well as with Albanian American businessman Mr. Harry Bajraktari. His name is very well known for all Albanians not only in the United States but also in the Balkans and around the world. His profound dedication to the Albanian concerns is generally known even within the halls of Capitol Hill and US Administration.

Congressman Eliot L. Engel, Chairman of the Albanian Issues Caucus

The Albanian Issues Caucus is an informational group that seeks to focus congressional attention on the concerns of Albania and ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and other regions of the former Yugoslavia. The Albanian Issues Caucus promotes six primary goals:

1. The peaceful evolution of democratic institutions in Albania, Kosova, FYR Macedonia, and other areas in the Balkans with Albanian populations;

Congressmen Eliot Engel Square in Peja, Kosovë

2. Alleviation of human suffering in Albania, Kosova, FYR Macedonia, and other areas of the Balkans with ethnic Albanian populations;
3. Expansion of cultural exchange between Albania, Kosova, FYR Macedonia, and other ethnic Albanian populated regions;
4. Respect for human rights, including the rights of minority groups in Kosova, Albania, FYR Macedonia, and other ethnic Albanian populated regions;
5. Establishment of free market economies throughout the Balkans; and
6. Promote contact between Albanian Americans and their ancestral homelands in the Balkans, the U.S. government, and other ethnic communities.

The list of members of the Albanian Issues Caucus includes the late now Congressman Tom Lantos, former Congressman and a great friend of Albanians, Benjamin Gilman, current members of the House of Representatives, Congressmen Dana Rochrabacher, Steven Rothman, Jose Serrano, Nita Lowey, Jim Moran, Jim McGovern, Sandy Levin and almost thirty others.
Congressman Engel has visited Albania and Kosova several times. He addressed to both Parliaments in Tirana and Prishtina calling upon Albanian representatives to pursue the democratic path and improve democratic standards in two sides of the border.

Congressman's contribution to the Albanians was honored by giving his name to the main city square of Peja in Kosova. Albanians are very proud of him and appreciate everything that he has done for them.

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James Adam "Jim" Belushi (born June 15, 1954) is an American, Albanian descendant, actor, comedian and musician. He is the younger brother of famous actor and musician John Belushi.

Belushi was born in Chicago, Illinois, the son of Agnes B. (née Samaras), a first-generation Albanian-American, and Adam Belushi, an Albanian immigrant who left his native village, Qyteza, in 1934 at the age of sixteen. The family's name at the time of immigration was Bellios, or Belliors.

After graduating from Wheaton Central High School, Belushi attended the College of Dupage and graduated from Southern Illinois University with a degree in Speech and Theater Arts.

In 1979, write-producer Garry Marshall saw Jim performing for 2nd City and arranged for him to go to Hollywood and co-star in the TV Pilot **"Who's Watching the Kids"** for Paramount, and then for a role in the television show **"Working Stiffs"** (co-starring Michael Keaton). Later, in 1983, he joined the cast of **Saturday Night Live** for 2 years.

Jim draw American attention through his role in Edward Zwick's film **"About Last Night"** with Rob Lowe and Demi Moore, playing the role he originated in the Chicago Apollo Theatre's production of **David Mamet's Obie-award winning play "Sexual Perversity in Chicago".**

He played the role of James Woods' spacey DJ buddy, Dr. Rock, in Oliver Stone's **"Salvador"**; the mentally handicapped dishwasher befriended by Whoopi Goldberg in the Andrei Konchalovsky film, **"Homer and Eddie"**, and the defiant high school principal standing up to drug dealers in **"The Principal."**

In 2000 Belushi co-starred in MGM's **"Return to Me,"** directed by Bonnie Hunt and starring David Duchovny and Minnie Driver, and he received rave reviews for his work with Gregory Hines in Showtime's **"Who Killed Atlanta's Children?"** As his popularity grew over the years, so did his roles in films, theater, and television.

Belushi has performed on Broadway in Herb Gardner's acclaimed **"Conversations with My Father"** at the Royal Theatre, off-Broadway in **"True West,"** at the Cherry Lane Theatre in the Williamstown Theatre Festival production of John Guare's **"Moon Over Miami,"** and for Joseph Papp as the Pirate King in **"Pirates of Penzance."** In addition he does numerous voiceovers for films, television and for commercials.

He does not only keep busy acting in films, but also performs with his band, **the Sacred Hearts**. Jim has little time outside career and family, but has made a major commitment as founder and member of the board of the **John Belushi Scholarship Fund**, which supports college and college-prep students pursuing performance and visual arts education. Most recently Belushi has added authorship to his repertoire, with his first book entitled **"Real Men Don't Apologize."**

Jim is a dedicated husband and father he resides in Los Angeles with his wife - Jennifer; 2 sons - Robert (1981) and Jared (2002) and a daughter - Jamison (1999).

On November 11th, 2008, Albanian President Bamir Topi bestows the Order of the Nation's Honor to James Belushi in Tirana while he was invited as a special guest at a Tirana gala performance by prominent Albanian artists. On this occasion Belushi visited a primary school in Tirana and enjoyed a welcome, by officials in the Albanian capital including his long time friend Prime Minister Sali Berisha.

The Albanian President, while decorating Belushi, stated: **"You are a remarkable case and we are proud of you,"** after handing the Honor of the Nation medal to Belushi in **"gratitude to the man who ... inherited and preserved in the love for Albania and his Albanian descent."** A first-generation Albanian-American, Belushi admits:

"I have always been proud for who I am and where I come from."

Jim Belushi has been in different TV appearances and has always honored, supported and respected his Albanian roots; his most significant appearance was with Eliza Dushku on the Late Night Show hosted by Jimmy Kimbell. They were both very fond of Albania and its citizens, and spoke with great gratitude and admiration about their visit in the Mother Land.

ON OCTOBER 8, 2009, JAMES BELUSHI RECEIVES HIS ALBANIAN CITIZENSHIP

On October 8, 2009 the famous American-Albanian actor James Belushi received his Albanian citizenship upon his request. The official act was performed by President Bamir Topi to Mr. Belushi. I have always said: **"I am, an Albanian"** Belushi stated. Keeping his good sense of humor as a comedian he added: "I will always pay taxes in Albania."

James Belushi as well as other famous Albanian Americans in the United States of America forms a solid bridge for the strong relationship between two countries. We, Albanians in Albania are proud of them.

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Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton *(born October 26, 1947) is the 67th United States Secretary of State, serving in the administration of President Barack Obama.*
She was a United States Senator from New York from 2001 to 2009. As the wife of Bill Clinton, the 42nd President of the United States, she was the First Lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001. She was a leading candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in the 2008 election.

Hillary Clinton, together with her husband, President Bill Clinton are always regarded as friends of Albanians and two US great politicians that saved the life of two million Albanians from Milosevic's killing machine. Herby, are some statements and consideration of Secretary of State Clinton about the war in Kosova.

Yugoslav involvement good on both moral & strategic grounds :
Hillary Clinton called for the US to reject isolationism and aggressively engage itself in world affairs in the tradition of President Truman at the end of WWII. She cited American involvement in Bosnia and Kosovo as examples of foreign engagements she favored on moral and strategic ground, but also suggested that Americans needed to consider becoming involved in solving crises that are not only military in nature.

Source: Dean Murphy, NY Times Oct 20, 2000

Urged president to bomb Serbians

On March 21, 1999, Hillary expressed her views by phone to the President: "I urged him to bomb." The Clintons argued the issue over the next few days.
[The President expressed] what-ifs: What if bombing promoted more executions? What if it took apart the NATO alliance? Hillary responded, "You cannot let this go on at the end of a century that has seen the major holocaust of our time. What do we have NATO for if not to defend our way of life?" The next day the President declared that force was necessary.

Source: Hillary's Choice by Gail Sheehy, p. 345 Dec 9, 1999

Kosovo's unified message: We will not turn away

I've met people who are determined to rebuild Kosovo with a sense of positive energy and not vindictiveness and retribution.
This has been possible because our nations-our leaders and our citizens-stood up against evil. Now there are some who I know who would quibble with my use of that word, but I think it fully describes the conflict we have been waging these last few months.
The many democracies that came together to wage this battle against Milosevic may have spoken different languages and even held different political views.
But they have sent a unified message at the end of this century that says we will not turn away when human beings are cruelly expelled, or when they are denied basic rights and dignities because of how they look or how they worship. When crimes against humanity rear their ugly heads, we have to send such a message as an international community.

Source: Remarks at The Sorbonne, Paris, France Jun 17, 1999

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A GREAT FRIEND OF ALBANIANS: US ARMY, GENERAL WESLEY CLARK

WESLEY KANNE CLARK, Sr., (born December 23, 1944) is a retired general of the United States Army. Clark was valedictorian of his class at West Point, was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to the University of Oxford where he obtained a degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, and later graduated from the Command and General Staff College with a master's degree in military science. He spent 34 years in the Army and the Department of Defense, receiving many military decorations, several honorary knighthoods, and a Presidential Medal of Freedom. *Clark commanded Operation Allied Force in the Kosova War* during his term as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO from 1997 to 2000.

General Clark is regarded as e hero not only from Americans but also from Albanians in both sides of the Albanian – Kosova border. Albanians in Albania love him for what he has done for their brothers in Kosova while those in Kosova love him for saving their lives during 78 days of NATO bombardment against military targets of Milosevic's killing machine. After the war,General Clark strengthened his relationship with Albanian Americans in the United States becoming one of the closest friends of main Albanian American Organizations such as Albanian American Civic League, Albanian Pan-Federation VATRA and the Albanian American National Council.

KOSOVA WAR

The largest event of Clark's tenure as Supreme Allied Commander was NATO's confrontation with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Kosova War. The United Nations Security Council introduced Resolution 1199 calling for an end to hostilities in Kosova, and Richard Holbrook, a US diplomatic envoy, involved in previous former Yugoslavian conflicts, chiefly known for the Dayton Accord, again tried to negotiate a peace. This process came to an unsuccessful end, however, following the Raçak incident. Then U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright tried to force Yugoslavia into allowing separation of Kosova with the Rambouillet Agreement, which Yugoslavia refused. Clark was at the Rambouillet talks and tried to convince Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic by telling him *"there's an activation order. And if they tell me to bomb you, I'm going to bomb you good."* Clark later said Milosevic launched into an emotional tirade against Albanians and said that they'd been "handled" in the 1940s by killing large numbers of them.

Clark started the bombings codenamed *Operation Allied Force* on March 24, 1999 on orders to try and enforce UN Resolution 1199 following Yugoslavia's refusal of the *Rambouillet Agreement.* The bombing campaign ended on June 10, 1999 on the order of *Secretary General of NATO Javier Solana* after Milosevic complied with conditions the international community had set and Yugoslav forces began to withdraw from Kosova. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 was adopted that same day, placing Kosova under United Nations Administration (UNMIK) and authorizing a Kosova peacekeeping force. NATO claimed to have suffered no combat deaths thus making Clark the first US general to win a war without losing a single soldier to combat. NATO did suffer two deaths overall;

Gen. W. Clark amongst a group of Albanian Americans, New York, October 2000.

THE INCIDENT OF PRISHTINA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

One of Clark's most debated decisions during his SACEUR command was his attempted operation at Prishtina International Airport immediately after the end of the Kosova War. Russian forces had arrived in Kosova and were heading for the airport on June 12, 1999, two days after the bombing campaign ended, expecting to help police that section of Kosova. Clark, on the other hand, had planned for the Kosova Force to police the area. Clark called then-Secretary General of NATO Javier Solana, and was told "of course you have to get to the airport" and "you have transfer of authority" in the area. The British commander of the Kosova Force, General Mike Jackson, however refused to block the Russians through military action reportedly saying "I'm not going to start the Third World War for you." Russia eventually withdrew its aid when some nations - including Bulgaria and Romania - granted U.S. requests and disallowed Russian aircraft to fly over their territory, halting their ability to bring in reinforcements.

After the War in Kosova, General Clack visited Kosova and was awarded with the title "Hasan Prishtina". Albanians always pay tribute to General Clark for what he has done for Kosova.

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The Pan-Albanian Federation VATRA is the oldest Albanian organization in the world, still in existence and still active. VATRA's history rightfully can be considered the History of the Albanian National Movement in the USA.
VATRAis an organization that mobilized national forces in America and saved Albania from partition due to these forces. Faik Konica, has described VATRA's work as follows in a column published in "DIELLI" on July 7 1922:

"During those dark days, when Albania was occupied by foreign armies, when the state was up side down and when the partition of Albania was an open talk - Vatra, being advised by few patriots and inspired by its members' love for the fatherland, encouraged by the voice of Albanian people, took action and acted instead of the dead state. It didn't request any honorary reward, neither the rights of a state; it just undertook duties and expenses. VATRAspent money to finance the delegates, missions, agency subsidiaries, organized thousands of protests, in few words, the defense of Albania was organized through VATRA. It was so nicely organized that even the Greek PM Venizelos stated in the Paris Peace Conference: "*...the only serious obstacle about Epirus was that of VATRA...*"

First meeting to bring together all the Albanian American organizations into one federation took place on December 24, 1911, in Boston. This meeting was called with the initiative of "Besa-Bese" association. In these meetings were present: Faik Konica, Fr. Fan Noli, Kristo Floqi, Marko Adams, and Paskal Aleksi. The meetings continued until 28 April 1912, when VATRA was officially founded. The official records of the unity commission cites: " We call as formed the Pan Albanian Federation of America by the following associations: Besa-Bese, "Flamuri i Krujes-Kruja Flag" , "Shoqerise Kombetare-National Association" and "Dallandyshja". In this historic meeting a temporary board is named and its members are: Secretary, Fr. FAN NOLI; Treasur, LLAMBI CHIKOZI; Dielli Manager, KRISTO KIRKA; FEDERATION BRANCH MANAGERS: FAIK KONICA AND KRISTO FLOQI. Dielli Newspaper Supervisors: PASKAL ALEKSI, ELIA TROMARA and KOSTA VASILL

The Pan-Albanian Federation VATRA-"The Hearth", was recognized by the Massachusetts State and received its certificate on June 13-th 1912. In the original certificate are these names: FAIK KONITZA, LAMBI CHIKOZI, FAN S NOLI , KRISTO FLOQI, ELIA TROMARA, NAUM CERE AND KOSTA KOTTA.

VATRA's role during the Balkan War and the Great War. A few months after VATRA's foundation, in October, the Balkan War erupted. A month later, on November 28, 1912 Albania proclaimed its independence, in Vlore city. VATRAsent Faik Konica in Europe to defend Albanian national rights. On the other hand Fr. Fan S. Noli was involved in defending the Albanian National Church. Faik Konica remained in Europe until the World War I ended, while Fr. Noli returned to the USA in the year 1915 and took the reins of VATRA. During WWI VATRAgained strength whereas DIELLI Newspaper was published daily under Mr. Kosta Chekrezi's supervision.

During this time, many volunteers became VATRAmembers. A band was formed under the direction of Prof. Thoma Nasi, and delegates were named and appointed for London under the leadership of honorable Mehmet Konica. Towards the end of the WWI , in June 1917, VATRAlaunched a fundraising campaign to save Albania with the unforgettable motto, *"Stay strong, mother, do not be afraid, because your sons are in the USAled led by* Bishop Noli. When United States of America got involved in the Great War, Noli personally met President Wilson, who promised him to protect Albania's Independence and territory

On 4 July 1918 Noli accompanied Wilson on the presidential yacht Mayflower to the tomb of George Washington at Mount Vernon. There President Wilson delivered his famous address on the "Fourteen Principles" relating to nationhood and self-determination. Later that day Noli met with President Wilson on the Mayflower to speak on behalf of Albanian independence. There he received the president's pledge to champion the rights of the Albanians. Wilson declared, ***"I shall have but one voice at the Peace Conference, and I will use that voice in behalf of Albania".***
President Wilson kept his promises saving Albania from further partition.

President Wilson in front of a joint session of the US Congress in 1917

Through VATRAsponsoring many books were published such as: "History of Scanderbeg" and "Beethoven and the French Revolution" in English. Those two monumental books written by Fr. Noli were fully sponsored by VATRAmembers. Later, VATRA, through the meetings and assemblies, decided to focus its activities towards these issues:

Today, VATRAis still a very active Albanian Organization, led by the well known patriot, an Albanian American engine, Mr. Agim Karagjozi aided by other patriowhoo keep alive the excellent patriotic tradition. Recently, VATRAcelebrated one hundred anniversary of the First Albanian Newspaper Edition, "Dielli".

Today, VATRA's Office is located at the following address:

2437 Southern Blvd
Bronx, NY 10458-6501
Tel"(718) 365-6930

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AN ADVOCATE OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, US SENATOR ROBERT "BOB" DOLE

Robert Joseph "Bob" Dole (born July 22, 1923) is an attorney and retired United States Senator from Kansas from 1969–1996, serving part of that time as United States Senate Majority Leader, where he set a record as the longest-serving Republican leader. He was the Republican nominee in the 1996 U.S. Presidential election, but lost the election to Clinton. Dole is married to former cabinet member and former U.S. Senator Elizabeth Hanford Dole of North Carolina.

In 1942, Dole joined the United States Army's Enlisted Reserve Corps to fight in World War II. He became a second lieutenant in the Army's 10th Mountain Division. In April 1945, while engaged in combat in the hills of northern Italy, he was hit by German machine gun fire in his upper right back. His right arm was also badly injured. He had to wait nine hours on the battlefield before being taken to the 15th Evacuation Hospital. He began a recovery that would last until 1948 at Percy Jones Army hospital in Battle Creek, Michigan, where he met future fellow politicians Daniel Inouye and Philip Hart. His right arm was paralyzed; Dole often carried a pen in his right hand to signal that he could not shake hands with that arm.

Senator Dole and Kosova : Senator Dole started very early to get involved in Kosova question thanks to lobbing of the Albanian Americans led by Congressman Joe DioGuardi. He presented resolutions to the Senate and became an advocate of Albanians in former Yugoslavia. The first resolution was presented by Hon. Joe DioGuardi in the House of Representatives in June 1986 (H.Con.Res.358) followed the very next day by Senator Bob Dole who introduced the same resolution in the U.S. Senate (S.Con.Res. 150).

In the late 1991 Senator Dole together with five US House Representatives and Joe DioGuardi visited Kosova. There, they did eyewitness on the ground the discrimination, persecution and mistreatment of the Albanian majority by a small Serbian minority supported by Belgrade. They wanted to hold a press conference but were not allowed by the Serbian general manager of the Grand Hotel. They went out of the hotel to hold the press conference but were hindered by the Serbian police while the crowd of Albanians who were cheering them was severely beaten up, violated and forcibly dispersed.

Senator Dole kept being involved with the Albanian question during all years of 1990 up to the very last moment of the war against former Yugoslavia. He insisted to start the NATO bombardment against Serbian military targets. It is a well known fact that Senator Dole, although he had lost a race for the White House against President Bill Clinton, went to President's office end assured him that 46 per cent of Americans who had voted for Dole would support the president if he starts the war against Yugoslavia. Upon a request of President Clinton, only a few weeks before the war, Dole departed for Kosova but was not given entry visa by Milosevic's henchman. He spent one week in Skopje, Macedonia pending for the visa. After that trip he showed up before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Congress led by two other friends of Albanians, Hon. Benjamin Gilman and Hon. Tom Lantos. He argued with US diplomat Henry Kissinger about the rightness of NATO bombardment against Yugoslavia.

Prior to that hearing, Senator Dole had written an article for daily newspaper **The Washington Post**, February 5, 1999: Here are excerpts of the article:

…This weekend, Kosovo Serbian government officials and ethnic Albanian leaders will be meeting in France as part of a U.S. and European push to end the conflict in Kosovo. It is too early to say that this effort will halt the fighting, let alone lead to genuine peace. But it is not too early to figure out what it will take to reach and implement a fair, democratic and lasting settlement.

First, we need to remember how we got here and who started this mess. No matter how some of our allies try to muddy the waters, the fact is that the same man who started the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina started this one: Slobodan Milosevic. **It was his brutal, decade-long repression of the 2 million Albanians in Kosovo that finally provoked an Albanian insurgency.** We have long known that Milosevic stays in power by fomenting instability. His methods are violent and, as we recently witnessed in the massacre at Racak, his preferred victims are not soldiers but innocent men, women and children.

Second, we need to keep in mind that no matter how much we would like to share the burden of the Balkans with our NATO allies, **without U.S. leadership and the application of U.S. principles, there is little likelihood of a just and sustainable settlement.** Our European friends have historical prejudices that prevent them from being honest brokers. For example, the French have had close ties with the Serbs since the end of the last century and, even in the face of Serb- sponsored genocide, have advocated leniency in dealings with Milosevic.

More important, America must insist on democratic practices and democratic self-government for the Albanian majority in Kosovo. Any agreement must allow for free and fair elections to be held, the provision of civil and political rights to all citizens of Kosovo and the protection of minorities, including the Serbs.

Finally, the United States must ensure that any agreement reached in France will have built within it a real exit strategy. **If this is truly to be an interim agreement, there must be a date certain for a referendum on Kosovo's final status.** Also, the terms of the referendum must be established in advance and the results must be binding.

A referendum should include all three options: maintaining Kosovo as an autonomous province in federal Yugoslavia; giving it third-republic status; and independence. The Serbian and/or Yugoslav governments must not be allowed to veto the results of this referendum, or it will be rendered meaningless-or, even worse, will invite more violence.

The task ahead is not easy, but it is achievable if effective diplomacy is backed by the credible threat of the use of NATO force. Dayton would not have come about without Congress's voting overwhelmingly to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnians and NATO, in turn, deciding instead to bomb Serb targets. U.S. leaders and NATO must now show the same resolve.

Bob Dole visits a mass grave in Kosova, July 7, 1999

After the war, Senator Dole visited Kosova several times. He is always honored and welcomed by Albanians in Kosova who enjoy freedom today, thanks to the contribution of great friends like Senator Dole, one of the most respected war hero and politicians not only in the United States but also in the world. Albanians are always proud of him.

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A STRONG SUPPORTER OF KOSOVA'S INDEPENDENCE

SENATOR JOE LIEBERMAN

Joseph Isadore "Joe" Lieberman (born February 24, 1942) is a United States Senator from Connecticut. First elected to the Senate in 1988, Lieberman was elected to a fourth term on November 7, 2006. In the 2000 United States presidential election, Lieberman was the Democratic nominee for Vice President, running with presidential nominee Al Gore, becoming the first Jewish candidate on a major American political party presidential ticket. The Gore–Lieberman ticket won the popular vote but ultimately failed to gain the electoral votes needed to win the controversial election.

During his re-election bid in 2006, he won general election as a third party candidate under the party label **"Connecticut for Lieberman."** Lieberman has been officially listed in Senate records for the 110th and 111th Congresses as an "Independent Democrat" and sits as part of the Senate Democratic Caucus.

Lieberman describes himself as being **"genuinely an Independent,"** saying **"I agree more often than not with Democrats on domestic policy. I agree more often than not with Republicans on foreign and defense policy."**

Senator Lieberman has been very much involved in the Kosova issues. He is an ardent supporter of the national and human rights of Albanians in Kosova and in the entire Balkan region. He has strong relations with the President of the Albanian American Civic League, former US Congressman, Hon. Joe DioGuardi and the Balkan Political Affairs Adviser Mrs. Shirley Cloyes - DioGuardi; this has helped him to better understand the essence of the conflict in this region. Senator Lieberman was at the forefront of U.S. efforts in the 1990s to stop genocide in the Balkans. In 1995, as the slaughter of Muslims in Bosnia expanded, **Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) and Senator Lieberman** moved legislation that helped spur the Clinton Administration to conduct intensive peace negotiations, which culminated in the Dayton Accords.

In 1998, Senator Lieberman was a vocal advocate of U.S. military intervention to stop the slaughter of ethnic Albanians in Kosova. He joined Senator John McCain in sponsoring a resolution authorizing the use of force against Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosovic, which was undertaken successfully by U.S. and NATO militaries.

On March 29, 2007, Senator Lieberman introduced S.Res, 135, which expresses the sense of the Senate that the United States should support Kosova's independence. It says:

"If the U.N. Security Council does not pass a resolution supporting the Ahtisaari proposal in a timely fashion, the United States and like-minded countries should recognize Kosovo's independence on their own".

Right after this, on April 17, 2007 - Senators **Lieberman, together with Senator Biden, McCain, and Smith** introduced a bipartisan resolution calling on the U.S. government to support the independence of Kosova. Here is the full text of Resolution:

'In 1999, the United States went to war to protect the people of Kosovo from a Serbia-led ethnic cleansing campaign. Previously part of Yugoslavia, Kosovo has since been governed by an interim United Nations administration—an arrangement that has left the territory's political status in doubt and contributed to its political and economic instability.

Last month, after more than a year of intensive negotiations, the UN Special Envoy for Kosovo, former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, submitted a comprehensive settlement proposal to the UN Security Council, calling for supervised independence of Kosovo.

***SENATOR LIEBERMAN:* "President Ahtisaari is correct that independence is the only acceptable outcome for Kosovo. Independence for Kosovo is both necessary and just. This Resolution is intended to send the message that, no matter what our differences, Democrats and Republicans are united when it comes to the future of Kosovo."**

***SENATOR BIDEN:* "For eight years now, Kosovars have been struggling to build their economy and society on a foundation of uncertainty. They are justifiably fed up with the status quo. Stagnation in Kosovo is hurting Serbia as well. Belgrade's fixation with the issue is delaying critical reforms, EU accession talks, and the capture of fugitive war criminals. For the sake of both sides, it's time to grant Kosovo independence."**

***SENATOR MCCAIN:* "By resolving Kosovo's status, once and for all, the western Balkans can move ahead into a bright, prosperous future. Recognizing Kosovo's independence will allow the United States and Europe to take the next steps in integrating both Kosovo and Serbia into Euro-Atlantic institutions and arrangements."**

***SENATOR SMITH:* "It is in the interests of both Kosovo and Serbia to settle finally the future status of Kosovo as an independent country. Although I recognize that it will be difficult for Belgrade to accept this solution, I am convinced that the stability that will flow from this decision will be the first step toward including Kosovo and Serbia into the trans-Atlantic community in which both nations belong."**

The resolution calls for several concrete steps to support Kosovo's independence. Among its specific recommendations:

- *The United States should, in consultation and cooperation with its allies, vigorously and promptly pursue a UN Security Council resolution that endorses the recommendations of UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari for Kosovo's independence.*
- *The United States should oppose any delay in the resolution of Kosovo's political status as counterproductive, potentially dangerous, and likely to make the achievement of a lasting settlement more difficult.*
- *The United States should support Kosovo's integration into international and Euro-Atlantic institutions, including its timely admission to NATO's Partnership for Peace program, with the ultimate goal of full NATO membership.*
- *The United States should reaffirm its commitment to the Southeastern Europe, including the continuation of the military mission in Kosovo to deter and disrupt any efforts by any party to destabilize the region through violence.*
- *The government of Kosovo should exercise responsible leadership, taking particular care to reassure, protect, and ensure the full political and economic rights of Serbs and other minority communities in Kosovo.*

Showing his continuous interest to Kosova, on June 22, 2006 Senator Lieberman met in Washington DC. with Prime Minister of Kosova Mr. Agim Ceku and discussed State of Current United Nations Negotiations on Kosovar Independence. They discussed the ongoing negotiations between Serbia and Kosova under the auspices of the United Nations, United States, Britain, Germany, France, Russia and Italy.

During that meeting Senator Lieberman stated:

"I am proud to join those who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the citizens of Kosovo and surrounding nations can live their lives in peace. An independent Kosovo, where all ethnic groups can peacefully co-exist, is an important step in stabilizing a region of the world that has been torn by conflict for so many years."

Senator Lieberman has been and is a great friend of Albanians. He has played a tremendous role to bring peace and stability to the Balkan region and help Albanian in Kosova to live their life in freedom and prosperity. Albanians are always grateful for his commitment to their national cause.

CENTER FOR ALBANIAN AND AMERICAN STUDIES

AN ADVOCATE OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, US SENATOR ROBERT "BOB" DOLE

Robert Joseph "Bob" Dole (born July 22, 1923) is an attorney and retired United States Senator from Kansas from 1969–1996, serving part of that time as United States Senate Majority Leader, where he set a record as the longest-serving Republican leader. He was the Republican nominee in the 1996 U.S. Presidential election, but lost the election to Clinton. Dole is married to former cabinet member and former U.S. Senator Elizabeth Hanford Dole of North Carolina.

In 1942, Dole joined the United States Army's Enlisted Reserve Corps to fight in World War II. He became a second lieutenant in the Army's 10th Mountain Division. In April 1945, while engaged in combat in the hills of northern Italy, he was hit by German machine gun fire in his upper right back. His right arm was also badly injured. He had to wait nine hours on the battlefield before being taken to the 15th Evacuation Hospital. He began a recovery that would last until 1948 at Percy Jones Army hospital in Battle Creek, Michigan, where he met future fellow politicians Daniel Inouye and Philip Hart. His right arm was paralyzed; Dole often carried a pen in his right hand to signal that he could not shake hands with that arm.

Senator Dole and Kosova : Senator Dole started very early to get involved in Kosova question thanks to lobbing of the Albanian Americans led by Congressman Joe DioGuardi. He presented resolutions to the Senate and became an advocate of Albanians in former Yugoslavia. The first resolution was presented by Hon. Joe DioGuardi in the House of Representatives in June 1986 (H.Con.Res.358) followed the very next day by Senator Bob Dole who introduced the same resolution in the U.S. Senate (S.Con.Res. 150).

In the late 1991 Senator Dole together with five US House Representatives and Joe DioGuardi visited Kosova. There, they did eyewitness on the ground the discrimination, persecution and mistreatment of the Albanian majority by a small Serbian minority supported by Belgrade. They wanted to hold a press conference but were not allowed by the Serbian general manager of the Grand Hotel. They went out of the hotel to hold the press conference but were hindered by the Serbian police while the crowd of Albanians who were cheering them was severely beaten up, violated and forcibly dispersed.

Senator Dole kept being involved with the Albanian question during all years of 1990 up to the very last moment of the war against former Yugoslavia. He insisted to start the NATO bombardment against Serbian military targets. It is a well known fact that Senator Dole, although he had lost a race for the White House against President Bill Clinton, went to President's office end assured him that 46 per cent of Americans who had voted for Dole would support the president if he starts the war against Yugoslavia. Upon a request of President Clinton, only a few weeks before the war, Dole departed for Kosova but was not given entry visa by Milosevic's henchman. He spent one week in Skopje, Macedonia pending for the visa. After that trip he showed up before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Congress led by two other friends of Albanians, Hon. Benjamin Gilman and Hon. Tom Lantos. He argued with US diplomat Henry Kissinger about the rightness of NATO bombardment against Yugoslavia.

Prior to that hearing, Senator Dole had written an article for daily newspaper **The Washington Post**, February 5, 1999: Here are excerpts of the article:

…This weekend, Kosovo Serbian government officials and ethnic Albanian leaders will be meeting in France as part of a U.S. and European push to end the conflict in Kosovo. It is too early to say that this effort will halt the fighting, let alone lead to genuine peace. But it is not too early to figure out what it will take to reach and implement a fair, democratic and lasting settlement.

First, we need to remember how we got here and who started this mess. No matter how some of our allies try to muddy the waters, the fact is that the same man who started the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina started this one: Slobodan Milosevic. **It was his brutal, decade-long repression of the 2 million Albanians in Kosovo that finally provoked an Albanian insurgency.** We have long known that Milosevic stays in power by fomenting instability. His methods are violent and, as we recently witnessed in the massacre at Racak, his preferred victims are not soldiers but innocent men, women and children.

Second, we need to keep in mind that no matter how much we would like to share the burden of the Balkans with our NATO allies, **without U.S. leadership and the application of U.S. principles, there is little likelihood of a just and sustainable settlement.** Our European friends have historical prejudices that prevent them from being honest brokers. For example, the French have had close ties with the Serbs since the end of the last century and, even in the face of Serb- sponsored genocide, have advocated leniency in dealings with Milosevic.

More important, America must insist on democratic practices and democratic self-government for the Albanian majority in Kosovo. Any agreement must allow for free and fair elections to be held, the provision of civil and political rights to all citizens of Kosovo and the protection of minorities, including the Serbs.

Finally, the United States must ensure that any agreement reached in France will have built within it a real exit strategy. **If this is truly to be an interim agreement, there must be a date certain for a referendum on Kosovo's final status.** Also, the terms of the referendum must be established in advance and the results must be binding.

A referendum should include all three options: maintaining Kosovo as an autonomous province in federal Yugoslavia; giving it third-republic status; and independence. The Serbian and/or Yugoslav governments must not be allowed to veto the results of this referendum, or it will be rendered meaningless-or, even worse, will invite more violence.

The task ahead is not easy, but it is achievable if effective diplomacy is backed by the credible threat of the use of NATO force. Dayton would not have come about without Congress's voting overwhelmingly to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnians and NATO, in turn, deciding instead to bomb Serb targets. U.S. leaders and NATO must now show the same resolve.

Bob Dole visits a mass grave in Kosova, July 7, 1999

After the war, Senator Dole visited Kosova several times. He is always honored and welcomed by Albanians in Kosova who enjoy freedom today, thanks to the contribution of great friends like Senator Dole, one of the most respected war hero and politicians not only in the United States but also in the world. Albanians are always proud of him.

QENDRA PËR STUDIME SHQIPTARE DHE AMERIKANE

Organizojnë :

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Për pedagogë dhe studentë të Universitetit

Në nderim të 4 Korrikut

Ditës së Pavarësisë së Shteteve të Bashkuara të Amerikës

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- Një paraqitje e shkurtër e **Historisë së** Marrëdhënieve Shqiptaro- Amerikane shoqëruar me ilustrime të ekspozitës së Qendrës nga **Z. Mal Berisha** Drejtor Ekzekutiv i Qendrës për Studime Shqiptare dhe Amerikane
- Vizitë në **Qendrën e Studimeve Shqiptaro – Amerikane** të sapo hapur
- Kokteil i shoqëruar me Muzikë Dhome, luajtur nga Kuarteti i Harqeve: **PromuS STRING KUARTET**

Godina e Re / Kati i Dytë, 4 Korrik 2009, Ditën e Shtunë

ora 13.00

Ftohen pedagogë dhe studentë të Universitetit Kristal të marrin pjesë